



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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*James Kuhn, Cashton, WI  
Chairman*  
*Bill E. Schroeder, Hager City, WI  
Vice Chairman*  
*Vicki Burke, Holmen, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer*  
*Jon Bingol, La Crosse, WI  
Executive Director*

## **MINUTES**

### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING**

**10:00 a.m., Wednesday, February 11, 2026**

**Altra Federal Credit Union Operations Building, 1700 Oak Forest Drive, Onalaska, WI 54650**

#### **Call to Order at 10:00 am**

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. There were guests in attendance: Mary Ganley, Representative Derrick Van Orden, Ken Pearson, Economic Development and Tourism Director - Jackson County, and Amber Hamernik, Business Relational Manager, Old National Bank. The attendance roster is attached.

#### **Minutes of December 10, 2025, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the December 10, 2025, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the December 11, 2025, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Secretary Burke reported that on December 1, 2025, the balance in all accounts was \$585,543.35 and on January 31, 2026, the ending balance in all accounts was \$702,298.98. She reported the beginning balance on December 1, 2025, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,446,579.94 and the ending balance in all accounts on January 31, 2026, was \$1,060,711.83. Secretary Burke reported that the La Crosse County Economic Development Funds were transferred to La Crosse County to use for economic development. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gulbranson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Decision on 2026 MRRPC Budget**

Mr. Bingol directed the commissioners to the budget provided in their packets. He reviewed the expenses and income in the 2026 budget. He highlighted some of the areas of the budget including potential contracts with Monroe and Trempealeau Counties for comprehensive planning. He also discussed hosting a special educational event for the region regarding community finance at the end of the summer or early fall regarding TIF districts, municipal bonds, and grants. He reported that he is planning ways to utilize the Placer.ai software more out in the communities. Mr. Bingol also stated that CLA accounting firm would be beginning the audit on February 23 and it will be ready for the April commission meeting. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the proposed 2026 MRRPC Budget and it was seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, hearing none the motion was approved.

#### **Decision on Contract for Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that Jackson County had approached the commission to complete an outdoor recreation plan for the county. He said that the contract would be for \$4,500 and the goal would be to finish the plan before May 1<sup>st</sup> to allow the county to apply for available WDNR grant opportunities. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the Jackson County Outdoor Recreation Plan Contract. Commissioner Carney seconded the motion. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, hearing none the motion was approved.

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### **Decision on Resolution regarding EDA Planning Grant**

Mr. Bingol reported that the application for the EDA three-year planning grant required a resolution approved by the commission. He said that it is the standard resolution that has been used for the previous three-year grant with the only difference being that the match amount is 40% for the commission rather than the 50% in the previous grant. The three-year grant is \$70,000 a year for three years totaling \$210,000. He also reported that the new grant would be set to begin April 1<sup>st</sup>. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Burke to approve the resolution for the EDA three-year planning grant as written, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Decision on Resolution regarding EDA CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund 5 Year Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that the CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund is under federal guidelines and EDA reporting requirements. He said that every five years the five-year plan needs to be reviewed and updated and approved by the commission with this year being the fifth year and requiring a resolution be passed by the commission to ensure that the revolving loan fund is operating under EDA's guidelines. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Cooper to approve the EDA CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund resolution and seconded by Commissioner Brandt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any questions or comments, hearing none the motion was approved.

### **MRRPC Regional Comprehensive Plan Presentation**

Mr. Bingol reported that there were 28 responses to the survey that was sent out to the commission board. He said that there was a good mix of people of all ages and professions. He said the survey was designed to gain more information than a yes or no response. He said that work is continuing on the tables and gathering information.

### **Decision on Clean Cities Grant**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Clean Cities Environmental Group is working with a grant from the American Lung Association through the Department of Energy to look at the infrastructure for electric charging stations and compressed natural gas stations along the Great River Road and they have asked us to partner with them. He said that the work will include mapping current infrastructure and discovery recommendations with community meetings and public engagement in every county. He said that the work aligns with our work on the Mississippi River Parkway Commission and economic development and tourism of the Great River Road. After discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Silva to approve the contract between Clean Cities and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to conduct the electric car and natural gas station study. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, hearing none the motion was approved.

### **Update on Annual Audit with CLA Accounting Firm**

Mr. Bingol reported that the CLA accounting firm would be doing our audit again this year with a cost similar to last year's \$21,000 and the audit will begin on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Update on La Crosse County HMP**

Mr. Zabrowski reported that the La Crosse County HMP was progressing. He said that risks and hazards are being assessed in every township, village, and city with public engagement meetings. He said that these meetings assist the communities with developing potential projects. He said that we are also creating a GIS hub for the county to identify disasters.

### **Update on 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG**

Mr. Bingol reported that the 8 County Plan has been submitted and the plan itself has an emphasis on tourism and economic development and serves as a good resource for the region.

### **Update on Transportation Activities**

Mr. Harwood reported that he continues to assist with the Great River Road newsletter and the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant the Mississippi River Parkway Commission has received to promote the Great River Road. He reported that the 2027 Rural Work Program will be presented at the August meeting and the Title VI Plan will need to be renewed by December of 2026 which needs to be renewed every three years. He reported about the culvert grant that is now available. He also reported that the La Crosse Area Metropolitan Planning Organization is conducting a regional transportation survey. Mr. Harwood reported that ways to fund the SMRT Bus are being pursued.

### **Update on WEDC SBDG Grant**

Mr. Bingol reported that the WEDC SBDG Grant business plan pitch contest entries are due this week and so far, 6 businesses have applied and submitted plans. He has talked to more businesses and sent out reminders. He also reported that Happy Tails LLC, a business in Vernon County, received a revolving loan from the Vernon County Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund and grant dollars to expand their business.

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**Reports from Commissioners**

Commissioner Schroeder reported that the Hager City Train Station transported from May to December 2025 36 train loads, 35 loads of corn and 1 load of soybeans for a total of 16 million bushel through the facility. In 2026 there have been 5 train loads. The loads are shipped to Hereford, Texas.

Commissioner Cooper reported that Jackson County is moving forward with its new Highway Shop.

Commissioner Borreson reported that the Village of Ettrick is building a community center on a site on Main Street. There has been \$587,000 raised for the \$1 million dollar project.

Commissioner Anderson reported that a huge power line is coming through portions of the Driftless area in Vernon and Crawford Counties. Informational meetings are being held.

Commissioner Schlesselman reported that the City of Fountain City in Buffalo County has voted to employ a City Administrator.

No Old Business nor any New Business.

**Adjourn at 11:45 am**

Vice Chairman Schroeder asked if there was any other new business. Hearing none, a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

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Vicki Burke,  
Secretary/ Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<b>MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County – in person
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County – online
Del Twidt	Buffalo County – in person
Craig Anderson	Crawford County – in person
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County – in person
Ron Carney	Jackson County - online
Tom Cooper	Jackson County - online
Leonardo Silva	La Crosse County – in person
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County – in person
James Kuhn	Monroe County – in person
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County – in person
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County – in person
Richard Purdy	Pierce County – online
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County – in person
Phil Borreson	Trempealeau County – in person
George Brandt	Trempealeau County – in person
Charles Jacobson	Vernon County – in person
JoAnn Nickelatti	Vernon County - online
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff – in person
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff – in person
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff – in person
Jack Zabrowski	MRRPC Staff – in person
Josh Stratman	MRRPC Intern – in person
Ken Pearson	Economic Development and Tourism Director - Jackson County
Amber Hamernik	Business Relational Manager, Old National Bank